

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-04 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 EB-07

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H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /091 W

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R 021507Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6686

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0260

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, MT

SUBJECT: MINTOFF RESURRECTS A TUNISIAN CONNECTION

REF: ROME 2745 (NOTAL)

1. THE "QUADRIpartite SOLUTION" ASSOCIATING MALTA WITH ITALY, LIBYA AND TUNISIA IN SEEKING AN ANSWER MALTA'S FUTURE AFTER THE BRITISH DEPARTIN 1979, DESCRIBED IN PARA 2D OF ROME'S EXCELLENT REFTel, APPEARS TO BE A VARIAION OF AN OLD IDEA WHICH MINTOFF HAS RESURRECTED. OUR FILES REVEAL THAT ON NOVEMBER 3-5, 1972, AFTER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM MINTOFF, THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE SAME FOUR COUNTRIES MET HERE WI MINTOFF FOR DISCUSSIONS ON REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, COMMON MARKET PROBLEMS AND CSCE. (VALLETTA 1896, NOVEMBER 16, 1972.) (ROME 6445, OCTOBER 30, 1972; AND ROME 6475, OCTOBER 31, 1972 CONTAIN ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND.) A FOLLOUP MEETING OF THE SAME FOUR COUNTRIES AT A LOWER LEVEL WAS HELD IN MALTA IN
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MID-DECEMBER, 1972 (VALLTTA 2150, DECEMBER 11, 1972). THE RESULTS WERE LESS THAN OVERWHELMING.

2. NEVERTHELESS, EMBASSY ROME'S SOURCE IS APPARENTLY
QUITE CORRECT IN SAYING THAT THE "OW RE-SURFACED
"QUADRIPARTITE SOLUTION" IS MINTOFF'S PREFERENCE FOR
A METHOD TO HANDLE MALTA'S SECURITY AND ECONOMIC NEEDS
IN THE 1980'S. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD ME OVER THE
WEEKEND THAT THE MALTESE HAVE ASKED HIM " TO ARRANGE"
A MEETING IN MAY, 1976, OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE
SAME FOUR COUNTRIES TO PURSUE HIS IDEA.

3. COMMENT: MY ITALIAN COLLEAGUE, WHO IS NORMALLY
QUITE ANXIOUS TO PLEASE MINTOFF, IS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC
OVER THIS ONE AND TOLD ME THAT HE FEARS THAT FOREIGN
MINISTER RUMOR MAY TAKE A VERY DIM VIEW OF THE PROPOSAL
INDEED. MINTOFF IS UNLIKELY TO BE DISSUADED, HOWEVER,
FOR HE PROBABLY ENVISAGES SUCH A MEETING AS HELPING TO
OVERCOME PRESENT OPPOSITION CRITICISM THAT HIS GOVERNMENT
HAS NO VIABLE PLAN TO REPLACE THE BRITISH PRESENCE AS
IT PHASES OUT THE. IN THIS SENSE, A MEETING IN MAY
WOULD BE MOST USEFUL TO MINTOFF IN THE CURRENT MALTESE
ELECTION CAMPAIGN. IT MAY ALSO BE WORTH NOTING THAT
THIS QUADRIPARTITE GROUPING INCLUDES(BY COINCIDENCE?)
ALL OF THE
ACTORS IN THE LONG-RUNNING MEDIAN LINE
DISPUTE OVER OFFSHORE OIL-DRILLING RIGHTS IN THE
MID-MED AREA. . SMITH

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